

Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Report of the Permanent Town Building Committee to the 2021 Annual Town Meeting

Permanent Town Building Committee

The Permanent Town Building Committee (PTBC) was established by the 1969 Town Meeting to oversee the design and construction of new buildings and major renovations for Town of Arlington properties. The Committee is comprised of five citizen members, appointed jointly by the chairs of the Select Board, Finance Committee, and School Committee, a representative of the School Committee and in addition the Town Manager, Superintendent of Schools, and Facilities Director or their designees.

Activities in 2020

Despite the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the two main projects overseen by the PTBC in 2020 continued moving forward with only minor interruptions due to the public health emergency.

Public Works Town Yard project (renovation and new construction): Early in 2020 Commodore Builders was chosen as the construction manager for the Town Yard project and was engaged under a construction manager at risk (CM@R) contract. This form of contract enables much closer collaboration and integration of design and construction services and was determined to be a better method for this complex and multi-phase project. The original Owner Project Manager, KVA, resigned from the project early in 2020 and was replaced by Sydney Associates.

As the design of the project moved from the schematic phase to the design development phase, and new cost estimates were developed, it became apparent that the original funding for the project would be insufficient. A number of factors caused this increase: a market spike in construction costs in the overheated Boston market, the use of the CM@R construction management method with its associated contingencies, changes in scope related to the Arlington High School project and delays due to coordination with the AHS project.

After a thorough review of these cost increases and changes, the PTBC determined that the best path forward for the Town was to proceed with the full scope of the project. The alternative was to implement changes that would leave serious deficiencies at the Town Yard site, and result in the need for future projects within a short amount of time. Further, the

project team had sufficient evidence that the Town could benefit from a decline in construction costs due to the general slowdown in the construction industry due to the pandemic.

After briefings from the project team, the Capital Planning Committee and the Finance Committee voted to support the full scope of the project. At the November 30, 2020, Special Town Meeting, the Capital Planning Committee recommended a vote in favor of providing an additional \$8.9m in funding for this project. The article was approved by a vote of 237-9.

Through the end of 2020 and into early 2021, the final construction documents were produced by the design team under the direction and coordination of Weston & Sampson. Construction bid were solicited in anticipation of starting construction in the Spring of 2021. However, the construction bids came in much higher than expected which upon further investigation and analysis was determined to be due to significant pandemic-related factors that were not known at the time of the November, 2020 Town Meeting vote. Specifically:

- The supply chain for essential construction materials (lumber, steel, copper, etc.) had been severely disrupted by the constriction of supply of these materials; factories had been closed or were running at much less than full capacity.
- The construction industry across the US and particularly in the Boston area experienced a sooner-than-expected rebound of investment in many major construction projects. The pent-up demand combined with a strong economy – despite the pandemic – resulted in a large increase in demand for scarce construction materials, as well as for construction labor.
- The increased in construction costs for the Town Yard project also carried related increases in “soft costs” for architects and engineers, as well as the need for higher construction contingencies due to the uncertainty in the construction market.

After much concentrated effort by the design team and the PTBC, certain value-based project reductions were implemented to lower the cost. However, the PTBC maintained a consensus that the Town should still conduct a comprehensive and complete project to avoid the need for future and more expensive and extensive maintenance of the Town Yard buildings if the project had been greatly reduced in scope.

After further briefings from the project team, the Capital Planning Committee and then the Finance Committee (13-4) voted to support the full scope of the project through an amended Capital Plan funding article. At the May 17, 2021, Town Meeting, an additional \$5.4m in funding for this project was approved by a vote of 210-20 with 4 abstentions.

As of the writing of this report, the contractor is mobilizing to the site and the project is underway.

Central School (renovation): Early in 2020 a contract was signed with Kronenberger & Sons Restoration, the low bidder for construction services for the extension renovation project in the

lower floors of the historic Central School. The project started in May 2020 after a short delay due to the pandemic. By the end of this project many parts of this historic building will have seen attention – from the chimneys, roof, and vents at the top and exterior of the building to the boilers and switchgear in the basement, and very extensive renovations to the basement and first two floors of the building.

Many unforeseen latent conditions were discovered during the early phases of this project, and these resulted in many expansions to the scope of the project and the tapping of the design and construction contingencies. Despite these changes that project remained on schedule through 2020. By late 2020 most sections of the building to be renovated had been explored by the construction team, but further challenges were discovered in 2021, including problems with structural elements that needed to be addressed.

As of the writing of this report, the contingencies set aside for this project had been significantly depleted due to the unforeseen, latent conditions with this historic building, and the expected completion date for the project is expected to be in the late Summer / early Fall of 2021.

Submitted by the Chair of the PTBC, June 5, 2021.

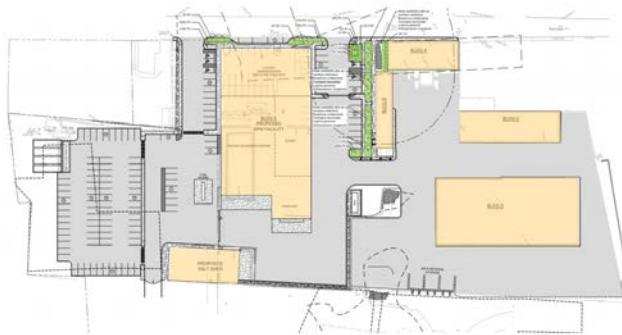
Member Listing	Appointment
Robert Jefferson	[6-2019 to 5-2022]
Brett Lambert, Vice Chair	[6-2020 to 5-2023]
John Maher	[6-2019 to 5-2022]
Allen Reedy, Chair	[6-2021 to 5-2024]
Peter Martini	[6-2021 to 5-2024]
Jim Feeney, Town Manager designee	
Michael Rademacher – Superintendent of Schools designee	
Bill Hayner - School Committee member	
Greg Walters - Facilities Director	

Public Works Town Yard project

Site Plan and View:

Town of Arlington
New / Upgraded Public Works Facility

Civil/Site



Town of Arlington
New / Upgraded Public Works Facility

Site Views



Current Site View:



Building A:



New Building E:

Town of Arlington
New / Upgraded Public Works Facility
Architectural – Building E



Central School – Community Center project

Central School – West entrance:



First Floor demolition:



Rigging in beam for first floor:



Work on gutters and chimneys



Ductwork and ceiling installation on first floor:



Occupied HSS reception area:

